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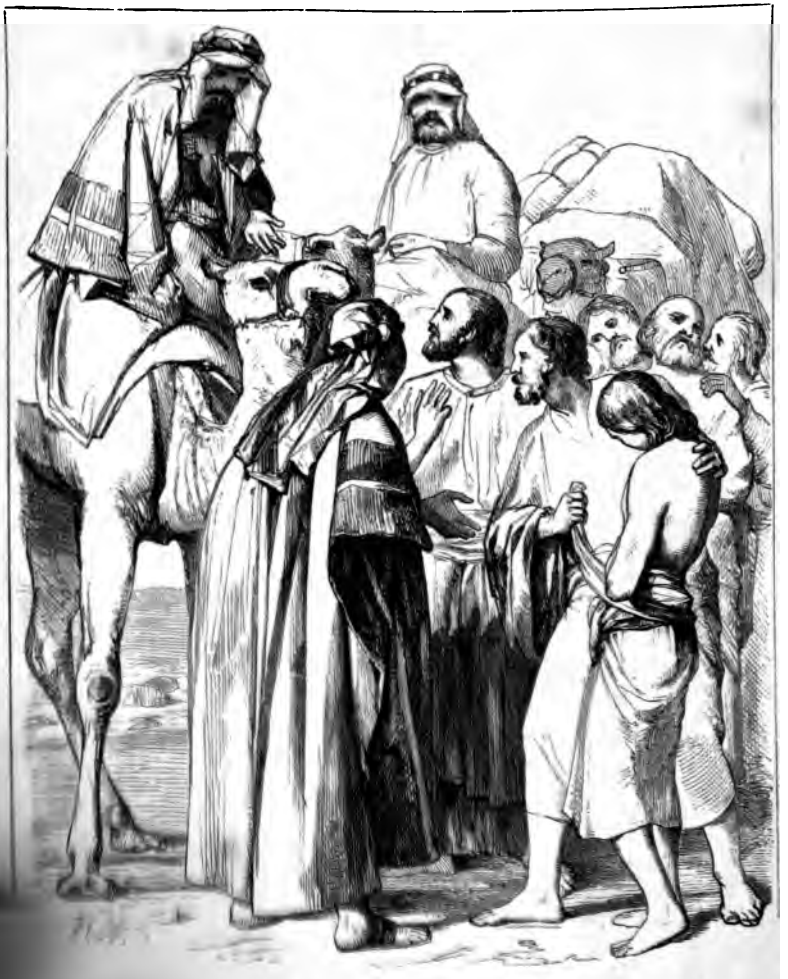

JOSEPH SOLD TO THE ISHMAELITES. [See page 21

THE

CHILDREN'S PICTURE-BOOK

OF

THE LIFE OF JOSEPH.

WRITTEN IN SIMPLE LANGUAGE.

With Sixteen Large Illustrations by Henry Warren.

LONDON:
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PREFACE.

Of all the examples set forth in the Old Testament for the guidance of "them that come after," not one is so well fitted for the instruction of Children as that of Joseph. Of him alone can it be said that no great sin is recorded against him throughout his whole history, whilst the Scripture narrative of his life abounds with points of conduct well worthy of the imitation of the young in every age. His obedience, his patience in trouble, his wisdom in prosperity, his dutiful behaviour to those

whom he served, his forgiveness of the injuries done him by his brothers, his tender kindness to his aged father,—all constrain us, as we read the story of his life, to wish to "go and do likewise."

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THE LIFE OF JOSEPH.

CHAPTER I.

JACOB AND HIS SONS.

HAVE you ever heard of Jacob, who was also called Israel? He was the son of Isaac, and he had an elder brother named Esau. We read in the Bible that Jacob bought his brother Esau's birthright for a mess of pottage, and that he deceived his father Isaac, who was blind, by putting on Esau's clothes, so that his father blessed him instead of blessing Esau. But Jacob became a very good man afterwards, and tried to please God by doing what was right.

I am now going to tell you about Joseph, who was one of the sons of Jacob. Jacob had twelve sons. I will not tell you the names of all of them, because you would find them hard to remember. But you must try to learn that Reuben was the eldest son, and Simeon and

Judah a little younger; that Benjamin was the youngest, and that Joseph was only a little older than Benjamin.

Jacob was married more than once, and although he was the father of these twelve sons, they did not all have the same mother. The wife that Jacob loved best was named Rachel, and she was the mother of the two youngest sons, Joseph and Benjamin.

Joseph and Benjamin loved each other very dearly, but their ten elder brothers did not like them much; and I am sorry to say they did not set Joseph and Benjamin a good example. This grieved their father, and made him love his two youngest sons the more because they were good and did not vex him.

Now Jacob had a great many sheep, and his elder sons used to take care of them, and to lead them to places where they could find enough grass to eat. Very often they had to go a long way from home, because the country was very hot, and the sun withered much of the grass and dried up the springs of water. Joseph sometimes went with his brothers, and sometimes he stayed at home with his father; and now and then his father would send him with a message to his brothers, who were taking care of the sheep. Benjamin was too young ever to help his brothers, so he always remained at home.

In the country where Jacob lived, the people did not live in houses like ours, but in tents. Tents are made by fixing long poles in the ground, and spreading over them canvas or coarse linen cloth, which falls to the ground on every side, so as to make a room with canvas roof and sides. Sometimes these rooms are square, and sometimes round, with one tall pole in the middle.

It was a custom in Eastern countries for a husband and wife to have separate tents.

Can you guess why the people in that country lived in tents instead of houses? It was because they had to move about very often to find food for their flocks, and they wished to take these tents with them. They could not well pull down a house made of brick or stone and take it from place to place with them, but they could very easily take the tent-poles out of the ground and roll the canvas up, and carry them wherever they liked. Even now the people who live in many parts of the country where Jacob lived, and in some other countries, have tents instead of houses because they find them better suited to their wants.

I have told you about Jacob and his sons, and how they lived, because it will help you to understand better what I shall now tell you about Joseph.

CHAPTER II.

JOSEPH'S DREAMS.

SOMETIMES when Joseph went out with his brothers, he saw that their conduct was not good, and after he came home he would speak to his father Jacob about it. This made his brothers hate and behave unkindly to him; and they disliked him the more because he generally pleased his father by his good conduct, and made his father love him better than any of them.

One day, Jacob made Joseph a present of a fine coat of many colours: perhaps it was very smart and gay, for the people in that country still like clothes striped with very bright colours.

Now when Joseph's brothers saw this fine new coat, they were displeased, and grumbled at their father, and spoke roughly to Joseph about it. They felt that Joseph was better than they were, and envy made them angry with him. This was very wrong of them, for they ought to have been glad that their younger brother Joseph was good, and pleased their father; and to have liked him the better for it.

JACOB GIVES THE COAT TO JOSEPH.

Soon afterwards, Joseph had a wonderful dream, and he told it to his brothers, and said to them, "Hear, I pray you, the dream which I have dreamed: for, behold, we were binding sheaves (of corn) in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance (or bowed down) to my sheaf."

When his brothers heard this, they knew that it meant that they were one day to bow down to him, as their sheaves had bowed down to his sheaf; and they said, "What! are we to bow down to you, as our sheaves of corn did in the dream? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words."

And Joseph had another dream, with a meaning very much like that of the first. This time he dreamed that he saw the sun and the moon and eleven stars bow down before him. And he told the dream to his father and his brothers. When his father heard it, he was astonished, and rebuked him, and said, "What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?" But his father did not envy or hate him, as his brothers had done.

Jacob and his sons lived at this time in the Vale of

Hebron, but the grass became scarce, and there was no food for the flocks, so Jacob's sons were obliged to go to Shechem, a place some way off, to find pasture for them; but Joseph remained at Hebron with his father. After some days, Jacob said to his son Joseph, "Do not thy brethren feed the flock in Shechem? Come, and I will send thee unto them." And Joseph said, "Here am I," and Jacob said, "Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks, and bring me word again." And Joseph set out to find his brethren at Shechem, but when he reached that place he could not see them, and after he had wandered about some time looking for them, a man met him, and the man asked him saying, "What seekest thou?" Joseph then told him that he was looking for his brothers, and asked him where they were feeding the flocks; and the man said, "They are departed hence; for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan;" so Joseph went to Dothan, and there he found his brothers with their flocks, as the man had told him.

CHAPTER III.

JOSEPH IN THE PIT.

WHEN Joseph's brothers saw him coming, even before he came near, they determined to kill him, because they were jealous of him, and feared that his dreams might come to be true, and that they really should bow down to him. Now there was a deep pit without any water in it close by, and they resolved to kill him and throw him into it. See how wicked envy and jealousy made these men. At first they disliked their brother because he behaved better than they did, and because his father was very kind to him and was pleased at his good conduct. Next, this dislike grew into actual hatred and envy, and at last this wicked feeling led them to try even to murder him, and to deceive their father with a lie, by telling him that some wild beast had devoured the lad. But Reuben, one of the brothers, wished to save Joseph and not to let his brothers kill him, so he persuaded them to let Joseph down into the pit alive, in order that he might come when they were

gone and draw him up again and take him home to their father.

And when Joseph came up to his brothers they treated him roughly and tore off his coat of many colours—that beautiful coat which his father Jacob had given him—and cast him into the deep pit.

After this, these unfeeling brothers sat down to eat bread, not considering how wicked and cruel they had been. While they were thus engaged, behold, a company of Ishmaelites came by with their camels, bearing spicery, and balm, and myrrh, which they were going to carry into the land of Egypt. These Ishmaelites were traders who took precious things from Arabia, their own country, to Egypt, to sell them to the people who lived there. They carried them on camels on which they themselves also rode. Camels suited them better than horses, because they had to cross a very broad and sandy desert where there was no water, and these camels could go for several days without water. Camels also have very flat feet, which prevent them from sinking into the sand.

As soon as Judah, one of Joseph's brothers, saw these Ishmaelites, he thought it would be better to sell Joseph to them than to leave him in the pit, so he reasoned

JOSEPH'S DREAM.

with his brothers and said, "What profit is it if we slay our brother and conceal his blood? Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him" to kill him. And the saying pleased his brothers, because they knew that they should get some money for him, and they hoped to quiet their uneasy consciences by selling him for a slave, instead of killing him. So when the Ishmaelitish merchants passed by they drew Joseph up out of the pit, and sold him to them for twenty pieces of silver; and the merchants took Joseph with them into Egypt.

Now after the other brothers had left the pit, Reuben, who wished to save Joseph, went back to it, but, behold, Joseph was not in it. This grieved Reuben much, for he did not know what had become of the lad, and feared that his brothers had killed him after all; and he rent his clothes and was very sad.

After the merchants had taken Joseph away, the brothers who sold him wished to hide their wickedness from their father Jacob; so they took Joseph's coat of many colours and dipped it in the blood of a young goat, which they killed for the purpose, and then brought it to their father Jacob, and told him they had found it, and asked him if it really was Joseph's coat.

When Jacob saw it he knew that it was Joseph's, and said, "It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt torn in pieces." And Jacob was very much grieved, and mourned for Joseph many days, and his deceitful sons pretended to mourn with him, and to try to comfort him. They did indeed succeed in deceiving their old father for a time, but their sin found them out at last, and all their wickedness was exposed to their father, and brought to light by the overruling of the great God whom they had so sorely offended.

JOSEPH LET DOWN INTO THE PIT.

CHAPTER IV.

JOSEPH IS BOUGHT BY POTIPHAR.

WHEN the Ishmaelitish merchants arrived in Egypt, they sold Joseph to a rich man who wanted a slave. This man's name was Potiphar, and he was the captain of the king's guard of favourite soldiers.

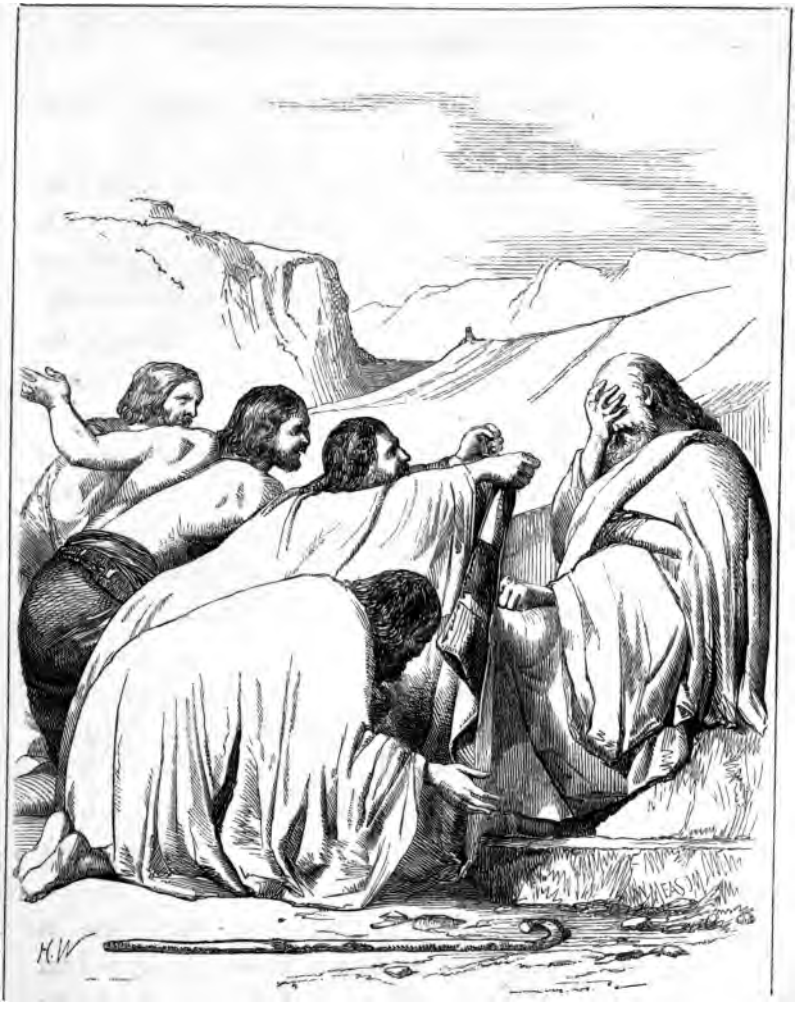
At first Joseph worked hard as a common slave. A slave is a man, woman, or child, who belongs to another person. In England no one is allowed to buy or sell people, but in Egypt it was allowed, and in many places even now slaves are bought and sold as if they were dogs or horses.

When a master buys a slave, he makes him do work without being paid for it. The master gives his slave food and clothes, but the slave must do just as the master pleases. However hard he is made to work, or however cruelly he is treated, he can never go away and serve another master. It often happens that when a master has more slaves than he wants, he sells some of them, and then sometimes one person buys a mother and another a child, or one buys a husband and another

a wife, so that the poor creatures are separated from each other for ever.

Joseph was Potiphar's slave, and Potiphar gave him common clothes and plain food, and made him work hard. Joseph did not lose his time in grieving over his misfortunes and his hard lot, but set to work cheerfully and did his work as well as he could. Though he could not get back to his father's happy home, he had one comfort left which he was determined not to lose—he had a good conscience—however unhappy he was, he felt that he had done no harm. God had sent him sorrow, and He would help him to bear it cheerfully. Just as he had been taught to obey his father, he now obeyed his new master, and when Potiphar saw this he began to be very much pleased with him. He soon set him to a better kind of work, and, as Joseph did whatever he was told to do quickly and well, Potiphar at last made him the ruler of all the other slaves. This duty was much more pleasant than working very hard, for he had now only to see that the others did their work properly and behaved themselves well.

As soon as Potiphar found out that Joseph was as honest and trustworthy as he was clever, he gave him yet more important duties; he said that he should be



JOSEPH'S COAT BROUGHT TO JACOB.

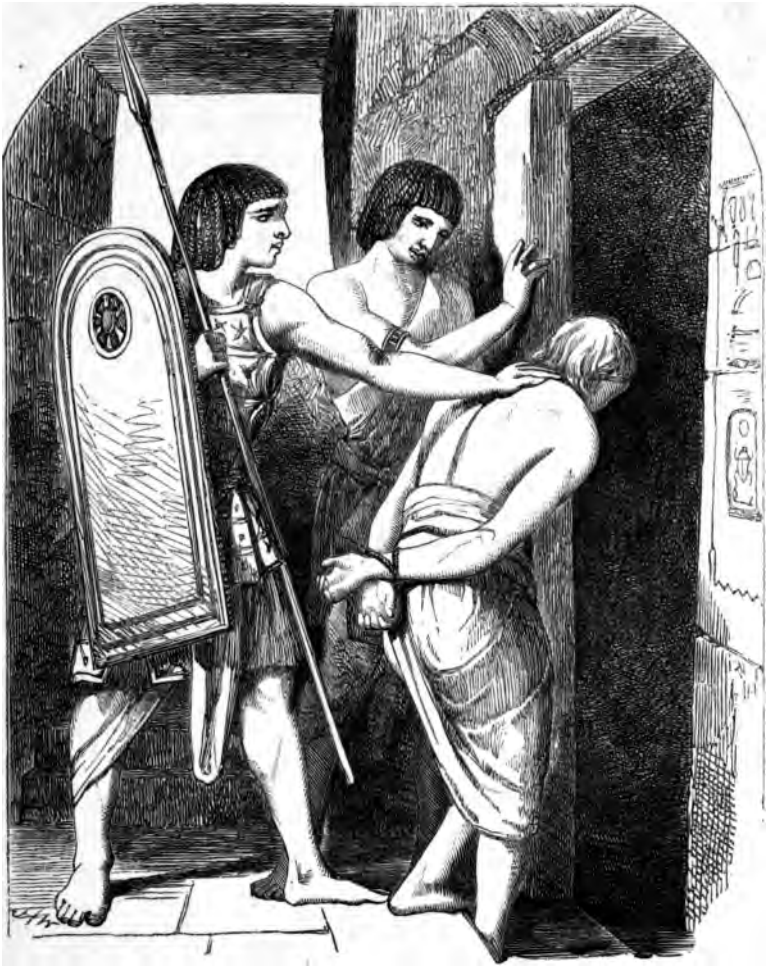
ruler over his whole house and take charge of all the food, clothes, and money. So Joseph ruled the whole house, and Potiphar did not even care to remember how much money he had, or what food or clothes or furniture were in the house, for he trusted Joseph, and was sure that he would take care of everything.

Joseph was now highly esteemed and looked up to by every one in Potiphar's house. But this honour did not last long. Potiphar's wife was a very wicked woman, so one day she accused him falsely to her husband, and told him that Joseph had done wrong whilst he was away.

Potiphar believed what his wife told him, and was very angry with Joseph. So he sent for some of the servants, and told them to put iron chains round Joseph's feet, and to shut him up in the prison which was in the house; for Potiphar had a large prison there, in which he shut up the king's prisoners and any of his own servants who did wrong.

This was a great trial for Joseph. He could not bear to be accused falsely, and that his kind master, Potiphar, should believe him to be dishonest and deceitful; but he had no one to befriend him by pointing out to Potiphar that he was mistaken and that Joseph

had served him well and faithfully. Yet even in the prison he was not left without comfort; he had still the testimony of his good conscience to console him in trouble, and he could trust to the merciful God, who had already delivered him from the pit, to watch over him, and in His own good time to bring him out of the prison.



JOSEPH CAST INTO PRISON.

CHAPTER V.

JOSEPH IN PRISON.

WHEN Joseph was first sent into the prison he was put with the rest of the prisoners, but he behaved himself so well, that after a short time the keeper of the prison employed him to take charge of the others. The keeper soon found him so useful, and steady, and honest, that he left everything in his charge; and Joseph did his duty thoroughly, and behaved himself so well that the keeper did not trouble himself to look after anything he had put under his care, for Joseph's conduct earned for him a good character, and the keeper knew he could always rely upon him.

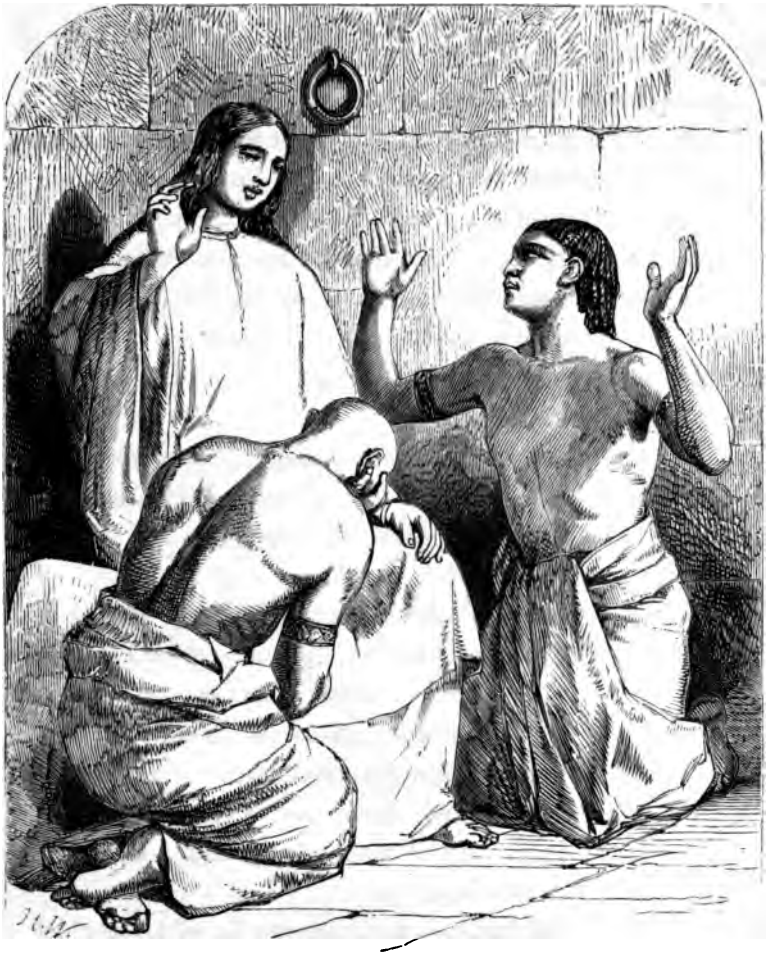
After these things it came to pass that Pharaoh king of Egypt was offended with two of his officers; one was the chief of the butlers, who used to keep the king's wine and pour it out for him, and to give him the cup when he wished to drink—the other used to bake the king's meat and bread, and was called the chief of the bakers; so he put them in prison

under the charge of Potiphar the captain of the guard, even in the prison where Joseph was.

Now Potiphar knew how well Joseph had behaved since he was sent to the prison, and Potiphar told him to take charge of the chief butler and the chief baker, and to serve them. This Joseph did, and it happened that when he went in one morning to the butler and the baker to give them their breakfast, he thought they looked very sad and downcast, and he asked them, "Wherefore look ye so sadly to-day? And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and we have no one to explain it to us. And Joseph said unto them, Does not it belong to God to explain dreams? but tell me, I pray you, what they were.

"And the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, In my dream, behold, a vine was before me; and in the vine were three branches: and it was as though it budded, and her blossoms shot forth; and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes: and Pharaoh's cup was in my hand: and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand."

When Joseph had heard the dream, he told the chief butler he would tell him what it meant, and he said, "This



JOSEPH INTERPRETS THE DREAMS OF THE BUTLER AND BAKER.

is the explanation of it: The three branches are three days: yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head, and restore thee unto thy place: and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand as you used to do." Joseph then begged the chief butler to be kind to him, and to remember him, and to try to persuade the king to set him at liberty; and he told him he had been taken away from his father's country and sold as a slave, but that he had not done anything wrong although he was kept in the prison.

Then the chief baker, who was glad to find what a good meaning there was to the butler's dream, made haste to tell his own to Joseph, and said, "I also was in my dream, and, behold, I had three white baskets on my head: and in the uppermost basket there was of all manner of bake-meats for Pharaoh; and the birds did eat them out of the basket upon my head." After hearing the dream Joseph told him he knew what it meant, and said: "The three baskets are three days: yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thy head from off thee, and shall hang thee on a tree; and the birds shall eat thy flesh from off thee."

And it came to pass that everything happened to the butler and the baker according to the explanation of

Joseph, for on the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, the king made a feast for all his servants. And he remembered that the chief butler and the chief baker were in prison, and sent for them; but not for the same purpose. The chief butler he restored to his office, and let him have charge of the wine as heretofore; but he hanged the chief baker.

And did the chief butler remember Joseph? No; he was much pleased with him for explaining the dream, and foretelling his being restored unto the king's favour: but when he escaped from prison he thought no more of Joseph or his kindness, nor did he ask the king to release him.

CHAPTER VI.

The King's Dream.

One night about two years after King Pharaoh had forgiven his butler, and punished his baker, as we have just read, he had a strange dream himself.

He dreamed that he stood by a river, and that while he was looking round him, seven fine fat cows came up out of the water and began to feed in a field that was beside the river.

At the same time seven very thin ugly cows came up also out of the water, and stood close to the fat cows; and all at once, the thin cows ate the fat ones up. Then Pharaoh awoke.

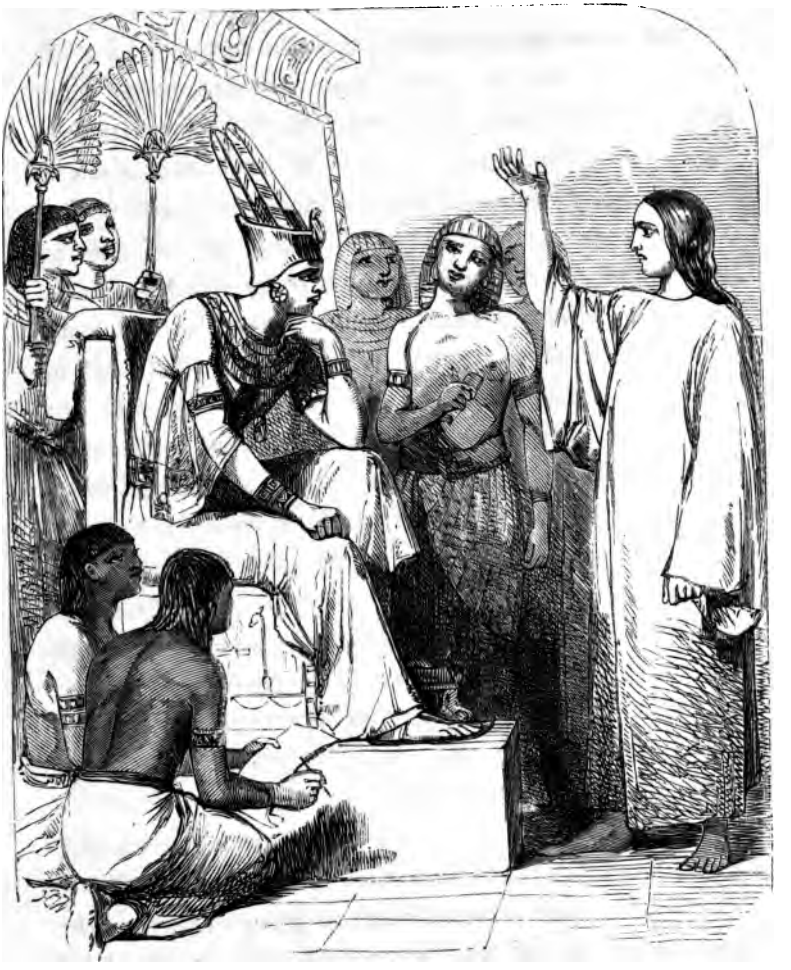
But almost directly he fell asleep again, and this time he dreamed that he saw a stalk of corn grow out of the ground, with seven fine ears upon it, all full of grains and looking very pretty; but just then seven thin and shrivelled ears grew up close to the fine ones, and while Pharaoh was looking at them, the seven thin ears of corn ate up the seven fine ears.

And when the king awoke again he felt very sad. It was strange that he should have two dreams so much alike, and that both should end so unfortunately—the bad things eating up the good. What could it mean?

Now King Pharaoh felt just as the two men in prison had felt; he could not be happy till he was able to understand why he had dreamed these things. So he sent for all the wise men of his kingdom, and told one after another what his dreams had been, but none of them could tell him what they meant. At last the chief butler heard of these dreams; and he, remembering his own dream in the prison, went to the king and told him that when he and the chief baker were in prison they each had a strange dream, and that a young man belonging to the prison had showed them what the dreams meant. The young man told him that he (the chief butler) should be restored to favour and serve the king again, but that the chief baker should be hanged; and these things came to pass according to his explanation.

When King Pharaoh heard this he was pleased, and sent to fetch Joseph to the palace to hear his dreams.

Then Pharaoh's servants came to Joseph and brought him hastily out of the prison. And Joseph shaved



JOSEPH INTERPRETS PHARAOH'S DREAM.

himself, and put on fresh clothes, and came in and stood before King Pharaoh.

And the king said unto him, "I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it; and I have heard say of thee, that thou canst understand a dream, to interpret it."

And Joseph answered the king, and said: "It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace."

The king then told Joseph his dreams, as he had told them unto the wise men; and when Joseph had heard the dreams, he told the king that they both meant the same thing; and that God had showed Pharaoh in his dreams what he was about to do. And Joseph said: "The seven good kine (or cows) are seven years; and the seven good ears are seven years: the dream is one. And the seven thin and ill-favoured kine that came up after them, are seven years; and the seven empty ears blasted with the east wind shall be seven years of famine."

And Joseph explained to Pharaoh that the dreams meant, there would be seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt; and then should follow seven years of famine: and that during the seven years of famine the people would eat up all that

had been stored and saved during the seven years of plenty: and that as the dream was dreamed twice, God hath determined to bring it to pass very shortly.

And Joseph advised Pharaoh to seek for a wise and discreet man, and to set him over all the land of Egypt, and to appoint officers over the land to store up the fifth part of all that the land produced during the seven plenteous years, and to keep what was stored up against the seven years of famine, so that the people in that country should not die for want of food.

And Pharaoh was pleased with the advice Joseph gave him, and at having his dreams so clearly explained, and he said to Joseph: "Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art: thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled." And Pharaoh added, "See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt."

Here we see Joseph's reward for well-doing. His good behaviour in the prison induced the keeper of the prison to set him to look after all the other prisoners, and this brought him to know the chief butler, and the chief butler found him so good and wise that he mentioned him to the king when the king was in

trouble, and could not get an explanation of his dreams. And when the king heard him, he was so pleased with his wisdom and uprightness that he made him his ruler over all the land of Egypt.

CHAPTER VII.

The King's Gifts.

Now when Pharaoh made Joseph ruler over the land, he took a ring from off his own hand and put it upon Joseph's hand, and he had him clothed in fine linen, and then he put a chain of gold round his neck. This ring was of great use to Joseph, for in those times kings signed their orders with their rings, instead of writing their names to them as we do now, and Joseph's possession of this ring enabled him to issue orders in the king's name, and thereby to ensure their being properly executed.

But not only did the king enrich Joseph with all these gifts, he also made him to ride in the second chariot which he had, to show the people how much he honoured him. And when Joseph rode forth in his chariot the people did homage to him, and they cried before him, "Bow the knee;" and thus the king gave him all honour, and power, and exalted him as ruler over all the land of Egypt.

THE KING'S GIFTS TO JOSEPH.

And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, "I am Pharaoh, and (I rule everybody in the land, and I promise that) without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt." And he gave him another name, and called him Zaphnath-Paaneah, which means "*Revealer of Secrets*," for Joseph had explained the dreams which Pharaoh had.

And Pharaoh gave Joseph to wife, Asenath, the daughter of Potipherah, a priest or prince of On, a city in Lower Egypt, whose priests were greatly renowned for their learning.

And during the seven years of plenty which followed, Joseph had two sons. And Joseph called the name of the first-born Manasseh (which means *forgetting*): for God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house. And the name of the second called he Ephraim (or *fruitful*): for God, said he, hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Seven Years of Plenty.

Now as soon as Joseph had been made ruler over the land of Egypt by King Pharaoh, he went throughout all the country to make preparations for keeping and storing up the corn and food grown in the seven plenteous years. And he ordered large store-houses to be built in every city, so that he might put the corn grown during the years of plenty therein; to preserve it for use during the years of famine.

At length the years of plenty came, and the earth brought forth corn in very great abundance; so that there was quite enough to feed all the people of Egypt, and much to spare. And Joseph gathered up all the corn which the people did not then want for food, and kept it in the large store-houses which he had built: all the corn grown round about any city, he put in the store-house belonging to that city; and he would not let it be used until the years of famine came. And during the seven years of plenty, the earth brought forth so

much that the Bible tells us Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left off numbering (the quantity of it), for it was without number.

The people of Egypt were probably very much surprised at the great preparations for keeping the corn which Joseph made, and also at his buying all their spare corn of them; but this was because they were heathens, and did not know the true God, that God whom Joseph worshipped and feared. They worshipped idols, and bowed themselves down to images of wood and stone: but Joseph believed in the one true God, who made heaven and earth; the God who maketh the grass to grow upon the mountains, and herb for the use of man; and he well knew that God's promises would not fail, and that he would certainly bring those things to pass which he had made known to Pharaoh in his dreams.

CHAPTER IX.

The Seven Years of Famine.

And the seven years of plenteousness, that was in the land of Egypt, were ended. And the seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said. And the famine was very sore in every land, even over all the face of the whole earth, but in the land of Egypt there was bread, for Joseph had stored up much food during the seven years of plenty.

And when the people of Egypt found they could grow no corn or food of any kind, they became famished, and they went to the king and cried unto him for food to eat. And when they cried to Pharaoh, he said, "Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do."

And when the people who were sent to Joseph came to him for food, he ordered the store-houses which he had built in all the cities of Egypt to be opened, and the corn which they contained to be sold to the people, so that they might have food for themselves and their little ones, to preserve them alive. Joseph would not

give the people the corn which they required, because he had *bought* it of them, during the years of plenty, with the king's money, and he knew that it would be unjust to give away the king's corn to those who could afford to pay for what they wanted. And, besides, by making these people buy the corn, he not only got back the money to re-fill the king's treasury, but he also enabled the king to give away corn to those poor people who had not money wherewith to buy food, and who would otherwise have starved.

And when the people living in other countries could not get corn or food to eat in their own lands, they came into Egypt to buy corn for themselves and their families. And Joseph sold corn to all those who came for it, for he had laid up so much in his store-houses, that he had enough not only for the people of Egypt, but also for all those who chose to come into the land to buy corn of him.

CHAPTER X.

Corn in Egypt.

Now when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons, "Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt: get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may live, and not die." So Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt; but Benjamin, his youngest brother, went not down with the rest, for his father feared lest any harm should happen to him.

And Joseph was the governor over the land of Egypt, and he it was that sold to all the people of the land: and Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth. And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but he pretended not to know them, and made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them. And he said unto them, "Whence come ye?" and they said, "From the land of Canaan, to buy food."

Then Joseph remembered the dream that he had

THE BROTHERS BOWING DOWN BEFORE JOSEPH.

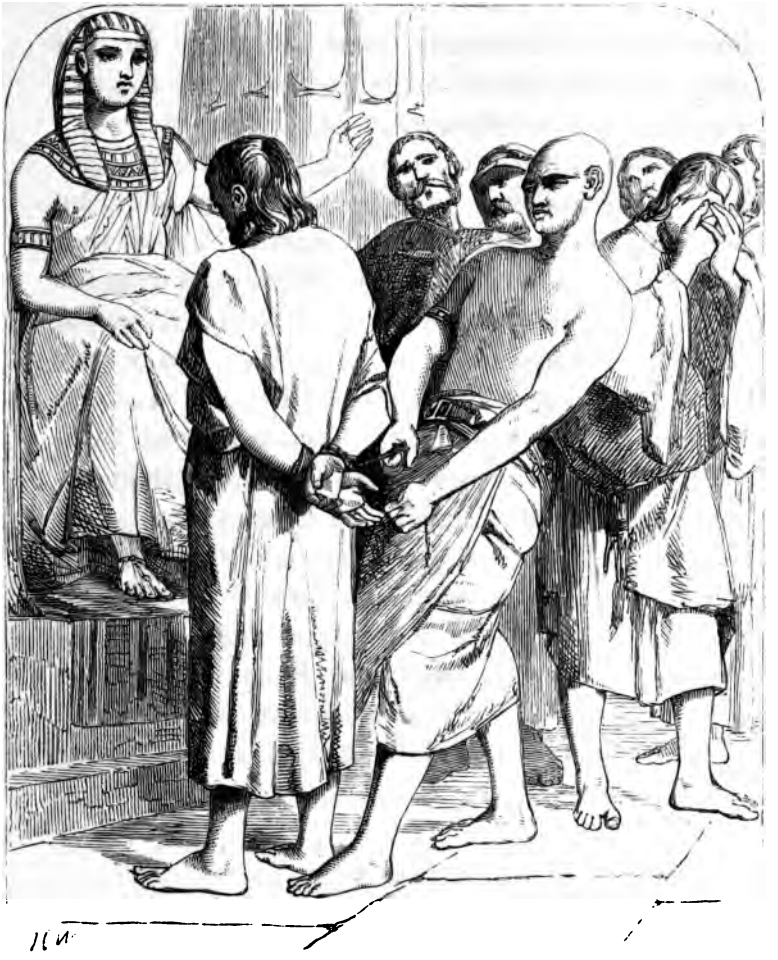
dreamed, foretelling that his brethren should bow down before him; and he did not make himself known, but said unto them, "Ye are spies; to see the nakedness of the land ye are come." He charged them with being spies, in order to find out if they would give a true account of themselves; for he knew very well that if they had been spies, they would have belonged to different tribes, and not all have been of the same family. And the men answered him and said, "Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come; we are all one man's sons; we are true men, thy servants are no spies." And he charged them a second time with being spies, but they answered him again, and said, "Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not."

And Joseph said he would prove that saying, and declared that they should not go away unless their youngest brother came there; and he said, "Send one of you and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall be kept in prison, that your words may be proved, whether there be any truth in you." And he put them all together into ward (or safe custody) three days.

And on the third day Joseph told them they must

leave one of their brethren bound, as a surety for their return, and that the rest might go home again and take with them food for themselves and their families.

And whilst they were standing before Joseph, they said one to another, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us." And Reuben reminded them that he had advised them not to sin against their brother, and that they would not listen to him. And the men did not know that Joseph understood them, for he did not talk with them in their own language, but spoke to them through an interpreter. And Joseph turned himself away and wept; and after that he talked with them a little longer, and then he commanded that Simeon should be bound before their eyes, and sent the rest home to their father Jacob



SIMEON BOUND AS A SURETY.

CHAPTER XI.

Joseph's Brethren return Home.

After Joseph had finished talking with his brethren, he told his servants to fill each of the sacks they had brought with them with corn, and to put the money they had brought, to pay for the corn, into each man's sack: and he told them also to give the men food to eat on their way home. But Joseph's brethren did not know that their money had been put back again into their sacks.

Now Joseph's brethren had brought asses with them to carry the corn home, so they laded the asses with the sacks of corn, and went away.

And as they were on their way home, one of them opened his sack's mouth to give his ass some food, and behold he saw his money in his sack's mouth, and he wondered greatly.

And he said unto his brethren, "My money is restored, and lo, it is even in my sack!" And the men were sore afraid and their hearts failed them, for they

knew not how the money came to be in their sacks, and they said one to another, "What is this that God hath done unto us?"

But they continued their journey and came unto their father, into the land of Canaan, and they told their father all that had happened to them both in Egypt and on their way home: and they said unto him, "The man, who is the lord of the land, spake roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country; as if we had come from an enemy to find out what was in the land. But we told him we were not spies, but true men; and then we told him we were brothers and that there were twelve of us, but that one was lost, and that our youngest brother was still with our father in the land of Canaan."

And the man, the lord of the country, said unto us, "Hereby shall I know that ye are true men; leave one of your brethren here with me, and take food for the famine of your households, and be gone, and bring your youngest brother unto me: then shall I know that ye are true men." And he said that if we would do this, and bring our youngest brother down to him, he would restore our brother Simeon to us, and let us buy and sell in the land.

Now when they had done speaking with their father, they began to empty their sacks; and they wondered greatly, for behold, every man's bundle of money was in his sack: and when both they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid.

And Jacob was much grieved, and his heart failed him; and he said, "Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away." And he told them that all these things troubled him very greatly, and would hasten his death, for they were more than he could bear.

And Reuben tried to comfort his father, and spake kindly to him, and promised to take great care of Benjamin, and to bring him back in safety; and he told his father that if he did not bring Benjamin home safely, he might kill his own two sons; for he said, "Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee: deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again."

But Jacob loved his youngest son, Benjamin, so well, that he could not be persuaded to part with him at all, much more to let him go away for a long journey, all the way into the land of Egypt; so he refused to let him go, and said, "My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone: if

mischief befal him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave." Jacob felt that his much loved son, Benjamin, was now the only comfort he had left on earth, and we cannot wonder at his not liking to let him go, even although he knew well that his son Simeon would have to remain in prison in Egypt until Benjamin went there, to prove to the governor of the land that his brethren had spoken the truth.

CHAPTER XII.

Second Visit of Joseph's Brethren.

Now the famine continued very sore in the land of Canaan, where Joseph's father, Jacob, and his brethren lived, and the people of the land were still unable to grow any corn, either for themselves or their little ones. And after Jacob and his sons had eaten all the corn which had been brought out of Egypt, Jacob told his sons to go to Egypt again to buy them a little more food. But Judah told his father that the man, who was ruler in the land of Egypt, had spoken very solemnly to them, and said that they should not see his face unless they brought their brother, Benjamin, with them; and Judah said, "If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food; but if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down."

And Jacob asked Judah why he had dealt so ill with him, as to tell the man that they had another brother? But Judah told his father that the ruler inquired very particularly, saying, "Is your father yet alive? Have ye

another brother?" and he said he had only told him the truth, and that he did not expect that the ruler would say, "Bring your brother down."

And Judah begged his father to send Benjamin, saying, "Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go; that we may live, and not die, both we, and thou, and also our little ones." And Judah promised to be surety for him, and told his father that he might look for Benjamin at his hands, and that if he did not bring him back in safety, he would bear the blame of it forever.

And Jacob said to his sons, "If it must be so now, do this; take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present, a little balm and a little honey, spices and myrrh, nuts and almonds: and take double money in your hands; and the money that was brought again in the mouth of your sacks, carry it again in your hand; peradventure it was an oversight: take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man: and God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin."

And Jacob's sons made themselves ready to go again to Egypt, and they took with them presents for the

ruler of Egypt, according to the advice of their father, and the money which they had found in their sacks' mouths when they returned home from their first visit, and some money for more corn, and they took also their youngest brother, Benjamin.

And after journeying many days they reached the land of Egypt, and quickly made their way to the city where Joseph was, and when they arrived there they presented themselves to Joseph, and bowed down again before him.

What a hard trial it must have been for Jacob to part with his dearest son, Benjamin! He had said that he would not let him go; but when he saw his other children and his grand-children starving, his heart relented, and he did let him go. The poor old man grieved sadly at parting with him, and could hardly be persuaded that Benjamin would come back again in safety. How anxiously must he have watched for his return, and how sincerely must he have prayed to God to watch over him, and protect him from harm throughout the journey!

CHAPTER XIII.

JOSEPH ENTERTAINETH HIS BRETHREN.

AND when Joseph saw the men, and that Benjamin was with them, he ordered the steward of his house to make a great feast ready, so that the men might dine with him: and told him also to show them the way to his house.

And the steward did as Joseph had commanded him; but the men were afraid at being brought into Joseph's house, and they thought it was done because the money was found in their sacks, and that Joseph wished to entrap them, and to make them all slaves.

And they turned to the steward, and talked with him at the door of Joseph's house, and said, "O Sir, we came indeed down at the first time to buy food: and it came to pass, when we came to the inn, that we opened our sacks, and behold, every man's money was in the mouth of his sack;" and they told him that they had brought the money down again, and also some other money to buy more food; and that they could not tell who had put back the money into their sacks.

And the steward spoke kindly to them, and comforted them, and said, "Peace be to you, fear not: your God, and the God of your father, hath given you treasure in your sacks: I had your money;" and then he brought out Simeon, and restored him unto them.

And the steward brought the men into Joseph's house, and gave them water, and they washed their feet (according to the custom of their country); and he gave some food to the asses they had brought with them.

And the men made ready their presents against Joseph's return home; for they had been told that he had invited them to feast there with him.

And when Joseph came in, they gave him the presents they had brought with them, and bowed themselves to the earth before him; and thus was fulfilled the first of the wonderful dreams which Joseph had dreamed many years before (as you have read in the second chapter of this story), for the eleven brethren, as represented in his dream by the eleven sheaves of corn, actually did bow down before him.

But Joseph did not yet make himself known to them, although he was very kind, and asked them of their welfare, and if their father was yet alive: and they told

him that their father was yet alive and in good health; and then they bowed themselves down again, and made obeisance to him.

And when Joseph saw his brother Benjamin he asked them, "Is this your younger brother of whom ye spake unto me?" and he said to Benjamin, "God be gracious unto thee, my son."

And Joseph's feelings quite overpowered him when he looked upon Benjamin, and he could not restrain himself, but went into his chamber, and wept there.

And after a time, Joseph dried his tears and washed himself, and returned to his brethren, and he told his servants to set on food for the feast. And the servants set on, for him by himself, and for his brethren by themselves, and for the Egyptians by themselves; for Joseph's brethren were Hebrews, and the Egyptians did not think it right to eat bread with the Hebrews.

And Joseph's brethren were set before him according to their ages, the firstborn was placed first and the youngest last. And the men wondered greatly at this, not knowing how it was that the man, who was Governor of the land of Egypt, should know all their ages and be able to arrange them accordingly.

And when all was prepared, Joseph sent to each of

BENJAMIN IS INTRODUCED TO JOSEPH.

them a mess of food from before him; but to his brother Benjamin he sent a mess five times as large as any of the others. And the men feasted, and ate and drank largely, and made themselves merry, and enjoyed themselves greatly.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Cup.

And Joseph commanded the steward of his house, saying, "Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put every man's money in his sack's mouth; and put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest, and his corn money." And the steward did so.

And the next morning, as soon as it was light, Jacob's sons loaded their asses with the sacks of corn and set out to return home to their father. But before they had journeyed far on the way, Joseph sent his steward after them; and he told his steward to overtake them as quickly as possible, and to reproach them for rewarding evil for good by taking his master's silver drinking-cup away with them.

And when the men heard the charge that Joseph's steward brought against them, they were sadly troubled, and knew not what to do; for none of them were aware

that the cup had been put into Benjamin's sack. And they said to the steward, "God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing: behold, the money which we found in our sacks' mouths, we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan: how then should we steal out of my lord's house silver or gold? With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die and we also will be my lord's bondmen." And the steward agreed with them that if the cup were found in any of their sacks, the man in whose sack it was should become a slave and remain in Egypt.

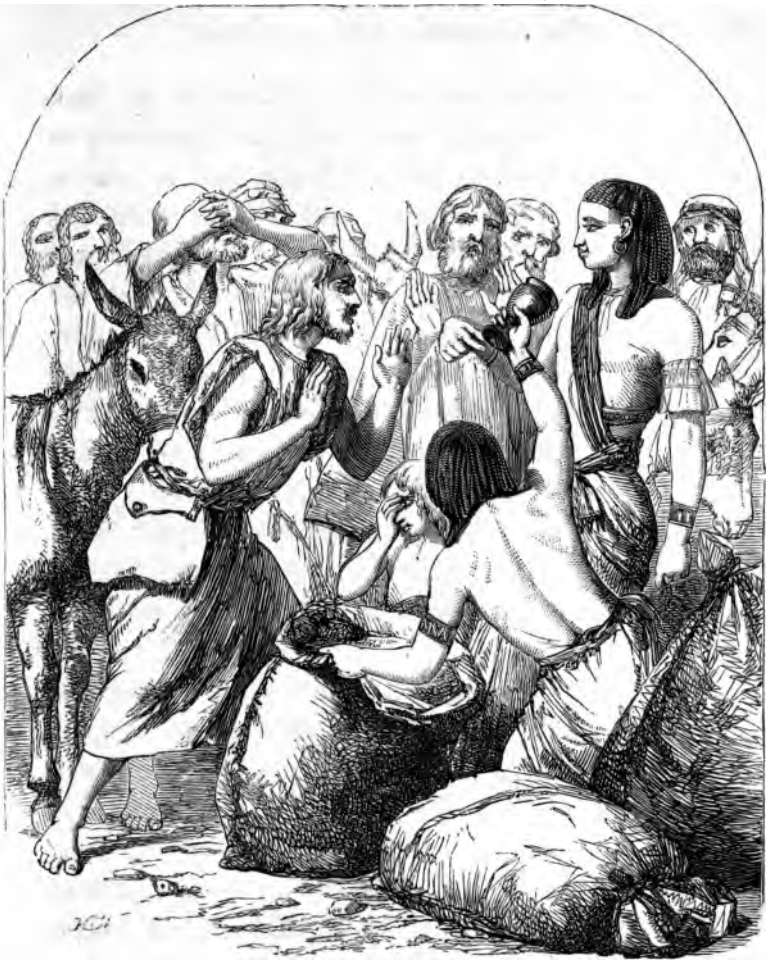
Now as soon as they had done speaking they began to take down the sacks from off the asses and to open them; and the steward searched their sacks, beginning with the sack belonging to the eldest, and examining each of them in succession until he came to the sack of Benjamin the youngest, and to their great surprise and grief the cup was found in Benjamin's sack.

Here was indeed a heavy trial for them, for they knew that if they returned home without their brother Benjamin, their father would grieve so much that he would pine away and die; and beside all this Judah had said that Jacob might kill his two sons if he brought not Benjamin back in safety.

At last it was arranged that they should all go back to the city where Joseph was; and when they came to the city, they went to Joseph's house, and as soon as they came into his presence, they bowed themselves down before him to the ground. And Joseph said unto them, "What deed is this that ye have done? Wot (or knew) ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine (or find out by making trial)?" And because the men knew not who had put the cup into the sack's mouth, they could not tell what to answer, but at last Judah said, "What shall we say unto my lord? What shall we speak, or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold, we are my lord's servants, both we and he also with whom the cup is found."

But Joseph answered, "God forbid that I should do so; but the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father."

Then Judah came near unto him and begged that he would not be angry, but would let him speak a word of explanation to him. And Judah declared to Joseph that he and his brethren had dealt truly with him; and he reminded him that when he had asked if they had a



THE CUP IS FOUND IN BENJAMIN'S SACK.

father or a brother, they had answered correctly and had said unto him, "We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one, and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him;" and how that he had told them to bring the child down, but that they answered, "The lad cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father and any mischief should befal him, his father would die;" and that he had said, "Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more."

And Judah told Joseph that after their return home from their first visit, they had related to their father every thing which had happened, and that when their father wished to send them down again they had refused to come unless Benjamin came with them. And that their father had pleaded hard with them, and reminded them that he had already lost one son, and that he should die of grief if he lost another.

And Judah begged Joseph to let Benjamin return home, and to take him for a slave instead, "For how (said he) shall I go up to my father and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father."

CHAPTER XV.

Joseph Found.

Now although Joseph's brethren had seen the ruler in Egypt twice, and had feasted at his house, they did not recognise him, or remember that they had seen him before; but he knew them, and knew that they were his brethren.

And Joseph could not refrain himself from weeping when he saw them once more, and his dearly loved brother Benjamin with them. So he told all his servants and all the Egyptians who were with him to go out from his presence, and to leave him alone with his brethren. And when they had gone away he did not restrain himself any longer, but wept aloud, and when the men looked at him and wondered why he wept, he astonished them yet more by saying to them, "I am Joseph; doth my father yet live?"

Then his brethren were sore afraid, and knew not how to answer him. They did not tremble whilst they were scheming to get him out of the way, or when they let

JOSEPH MADE KNOWN TO HIS BRETHREN.

him down into the pit, or when they sold him to the Ishmaelitish merchants. No: envy and hatred were then uppermost in their breasts. But now, when they felt that he was good and kind to them, although they had been so cruel and unkind to him; when they saw by his acts that he freely forgave them, they trembled at his presence. He had shown them that he could overcome evil with good.

And now, in the same kind, gentle spirit, he encouraged them, and said unto them, "Come near to me, I pray you." And when they had recovered themselves they came near, and he told them again that he was Joseph their brother, whom they had sold into Egypt.

Then he spoke very kindly to them and tried to comfort them and to show them that he did not bear ill will against them. He said, "Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life."

And he reasoned with them, and told them that though there had been a famine in the land for two years, it would last for five years longer, and that during those years there would be neither earing nor harvest. And he persuaded them that God had sent

him before them so that he might gain honour and power in the land of Egypt during the famine, in order that when the famine came he might be able to save them from starvation and preserve their lives by a great deliverance. "So now it was not you (he said) that sent me hither, but God; and He hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt."

And after he had told them these things, he desired them to make haste to go up out of the land, home to their father. And he directed them to say to their father, "Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt; come down unto me, tarry not: and thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks and thy herds, and all that thou hast: and there will I nourish thee, for yet there are five years of famine, lest thou and thy household and all that thou hast come to poverty. And (he said) behold your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you. And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen; and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither."

And when Joseph had made an end of speaking he went amongst his brethren and embraced his much loved brother Benjamin, and fell upon his neck and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck.

Moreover Joseph kissed all his brethren and wept upon them, and when his brethren had dried their tears they rejoiced at thus meeting with their long lost brother, and they talked with him and were comforted.

CHAPTER XVI.

JOSEPH SENDS FOR HIS FATHER.

As soon as Joseph had made himself known to his brethren, the news was spread abroad, and it was told to Pharaoh, the king, that Joseph's brethren were come. And it pleased Pharaoh well, and all his servants. They were glad because the good Joseph, who had done so much for them, had found his long lost brothers, whom he never ceased to love.

And king Pharaoh said unto Joseph, "Say to thy brethren, This do ye; lade your beasts and go, get ye up to the land of Canaan; and take your father and your households and come unto me;" and he told them also to take waggons for their wives and little children to ride in, so that every one who was near and dear to them might come down to live in Egypt. And he said they were to bring their aged father Jacob, and that they should dwell in the very best part of the land, and that all the good of the land should be theirs.

How happy Joseph must have felt when he heard the good king Pharaoh say, that his father and his

brethren and all their wives and little ones were to come to live in the best part of the land of Egypt, and to be fed with its fruits, instead of pining away, hungry and destitute, in the land of Canaan. How anxious Joseph must have been to see his aged father again.

He did not therefore detain his brethren long, but quickly sent them home with the waggons and plenty of food, as Pharaoh had commanded. And he gave to each of them changes of raiment, but to his youngest brother Benjamin, that brother who had never been unkind to him, and had not joined the elder brothers when they wickedly sold him to the Ishmaelitish merchants to be a slave, he gave three hundred pieces of silver and five changes of raiment. Yet he sent a still larger present to his father. He sent him ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten she asses, laden with corn and bread and meal, for his father to eat by the way.

So he sent his brethren away, but he knew well their natures, and that when they bethought themselves of the way in which they had treated him in former days, they might wrangle with each other, and each accuse the other of having behaved badly to the brother who had now proved so very kind and useful to them, and therefore

just as they were leaving he warned them not to quarrel, and he said unto them, "See that ye fall not out by the way."

How anxious they must have been to get home to tell their father and their wives and children the good news. They knew how much all of them would rejoice at hearing of Joseph again, and that they would be still more delighted when they learned that Joseph had asked them all, by command of king Pharaoh, to come down to live with him, and enjoy all the riches of his land.

So they hastened home, and when they reached the land of Canaan they immediately sought out their father and told him, "Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt." But Jacob's heart fainted and he believed them not. They had deceived him before, and he thought they were deceiving him again. They went on, however, to tell him all that had happened, and all that Joseph had said to them, and about the waggons and the presents. And when Jacob saw the waggons and the presents his heart revived, and he believed the things they had told him, and he said, "It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die."

CHAPTER XVII.

JACOB GOES DOWN INTO EGYPT.

Now as soon as Jacob had resolved to go down into Egypt, he made haste to prepare himself for the journey, and he gathered together all his sons, and their wives, and their children, and their cattle, and their goods, and set out on his way thither. And when he had travelled as far as Beersheba, he halted there and offered up a sacrifice as a thank offering to God, for his great mercy and goodness towards him.

And at night while he slept, in the visions of the night, God came unto him and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, here am I. And God said, "I am God, the God of thy father; fear not to go down into Egypt, for I will there make of thee a great nation." And this saying comforted Jacob, and he rose up in the morning, he and all his company, and journeyed onwards in the waggons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him. And when they had travelled now many days they came at last down into the portion of the country which is called Goshen.

And as soon as he reached the land of Goshen, he rested there and sent Judah on before him to tell Joseph where he was, and to ask him to come unto Goshen to meet him; for God had distinctly promised him, when he offered up his sacrifice at Beersheba, that he should live to see his son Joseph again.

CHAPTER XVIII.

JOSEPH MEETS HIS FATHER JACOB.

Now when Judah told Joseph that their father Jacob had come down with all his company as far as the land of Goshen, Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Jacob his father to Goshen, and presented himself unto him; and he fell on his neck and wept on his neck a good while. And his father Jacob was too much overcome with joy at first to speak unto him, but at length the good old man cried out and said unto him, "Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive." Little indeed did the aged Jacob think but a few short weeks before, that he should ever see his long lost son again, but God of his great goodness had willed that he should; and now he could greatly rejoice, for God had fulfilled his promises, and Joseph actually stood before him, face to face.

When they had somewhat recovered from the great joy of this meeting, Joseph began to think about where his father and brothers should live. And he said to

them, "I will go up and show Pharaoh, and say unto him, My brethren and my father's house, which were in the land of Canaan, are come unto me; and the men are shepherds, for their trade hath been to feed cattle, and they have brought their flocks and herds and all that they have."

Joseph expected that when Pharaoh had heard this he would send for them and ask them himself what their occupation had been. And he told them to say the same as he had said, viz. that they had all been shepherds ever since they were young, and their forefathers had all been shepherds too. They were to do this in order that the king might let them live in the land of Goshen. Here they would be quite away from the heathen Egyptians, for all the Egyptians hate shepherds and will not live with them. The reason the Egyptians hate shepherds so much, is, that many years before Joseph was sold into Egypt, some men from Arabia, who called themselves shepherds, came and conquered the country, and cruelly oppressed the people for many years.

And it came to pass, just as Joseph had said. He went unto Pharaoh and told him that his father and his family were come unto him. Then Pharaoh spoke to

MEETING OF JOSEPH AND HIS FATHER

Joseph's brethren, and they answered just as Joseph had told them to do. They said moreover unto Pharaoh, "For to sojourn in the land are we come. The famine is so sore in the land of Canaan, that we have no pasture left for our flocks. Let thy servants, we pray thee, dwell in the land of Goshen." Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "The land of Egypt is before thee, let thy father and brethren dwell in the best of the land, in Goshen; and if you know any among them to be good active men, set them to look after and take care of my cattle."

Then Joseph brought in his father Jacob before Pharaoh, and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.

And Pharaoh asked Jacob, "How old art thou?" And Jacob answered, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years; few and evil have the days of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers, in the days of their pilgrimage." Then Jacob again blessed Pharaoh and went out from before him.

After this Joseph placed his father and brethren in the rich land of Goshen, the best in the country of Egypt. It was also sometimes called the land of Rameses.

Here Joseph took care of them, and supplied them with food all the time of the famine.

How glad they must have felt, to rest at last from all their wanderings and troubles.

God had been very mindful of them, and brought them into a country where there was plenty for themselves, their flocks, and their cattle to eat, and a kind brother both able and willing to give them all they needed.

CHAPTER XIX.

Joseph's Rule during the Famine.

At last the famine was so sore that there was no bread in all the land of Egypt; neither was there any in the land of Canaan. And the people became very sad and unhappy. They thought they should all die. Already they had taken all their money to Joseph, to buy from him the corn which he had so carefully stored up during the years of plenty. This money had been laid by in Pharaoh's house. Then they came to Joseph and said, "Give us bread, for why should we die before thee? We have no money left." But Joseph might not give it to them because it belonged to the king, so he said to the people, "If the money fail, give me of your cattle, and I will give you corn for the cattle." And they did so; they brought all their cattle to Joseph, and Joseph gave them food in exchange for horses, and sheep, and goats, and cattle, and asses. So he fed them with bread till another sad year passed away.

At the end of that year, there was no cattle left;

all had been given to the king for corn. The poor people again began to despair. And they came to Joseph and said, "We cannot hide it from my lord. All our money is gone. My lord hath our flocks and herds. There is nothing left but ourselves and our lands. Why should we die in thy sight? Buy us and our land for bread. We will sell our land and be servants unto Pharaoh, if you will only give us food. And we pray thee also give us seed that we may grow some more corn, so we may live and not die, and the land may not be desolate."

And Joseph did as they said: he bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh. The Egyptians sold every man his field to get food. And all the land became Pharaoh's.

The heathen priests were the only people who did not sell their lands. Pharaoh had ordered that they should always be supplied with a regular portion of food, so they did not need to sell them.

Joseph then removed the people into the different cities all over Egypt and said to them, "Behold, now I have bought you to be Pharaoh's servants; now here is seed, go, sow the land. When the corn grows you shall divide it into five parts; one part you shall give to

Pharaoh, and the other four parts shall be your own, for seed of the field and for food for yourselves, your little ones, and your households." Then the Egyptians answered and said, "Thou hast saved our lives; only let what we do please thee, and we will be Pharaoh's servants."

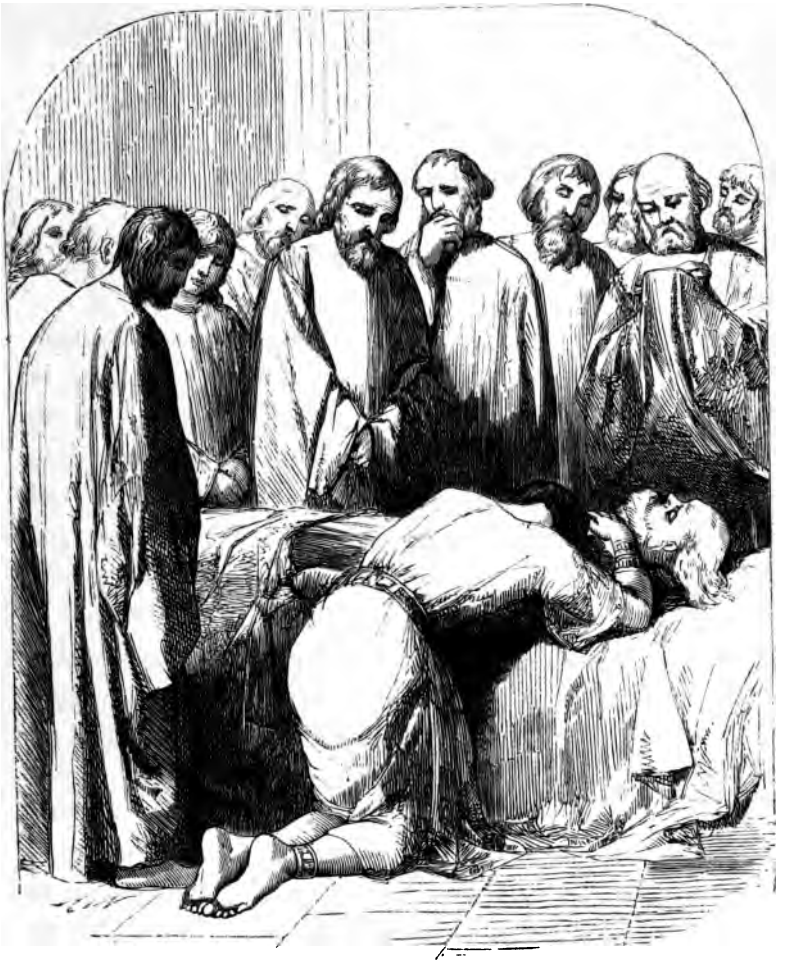
So Joseph made it a law that the king should always have the fifth part of all the corn that was grown in the land of Egypt. Only from the lands of the priests he did not have any, because they did not belong to the king.

CHAPTER XX.

JACOB'S DEATH.

AND the Israelites dwelt in the land of Goshen, which had been given to them, and they increased in number, and became exceeding many people. Jacob their father lived seventeen years after he came into Egypt, and his whole age was a hundred, forty and seven years. And at the end of this time he felt that he should soon die: so he called Joseph, his son, to him, and begged him, if he really loved him, not to let his body be buried in the land of Egypt. He wished it to be buried with his fathers in the land of Canaan. And he asked Joseph to swear that it should be so; and Joseph did swear unto him.

Soon after this happened, somebody came and told Joseph that his father was very ill. So Joseph took his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, and went to see his father. Now when Jacob was told that Joseph was there, he sat up in his bed; and he said to Joseph,



JOSEPH BEWAILS HIS FATHER'S DEATH.

"God came to me a long time ago at Luz, in the land of Canaan, and blessed me; and God said to me: 'Behold you shall have many children; your descendants shall become a great multitude, and I will give all this land to them, for an everlasting possession!' Now, thy sons shall be as my own sons; they shall have a part of this promised land, the same as your brothers Reuben and Simeon; bring them near to me that I may bless them." So Joseph took Ephraim in his right hand, and Manasseh in his left hand, and led them to Jacob. Now Jacob's eyes were very dim: he kissed the lads, and said to Joseph: "I never thought to see thy face, and lo, God hath showed me also thy seed!"

And Jacob put out his hands, as was the custom in that country in those days, to lay them upon the children's heads while he blessed them. And he crossed his hands, and put his right hand upon Ephraim's head, and his left hand upon Manasseh.

He then blessed them, and said, "The God before whom my fathers, Abraham and Isaac, did walk; the God which fed me all my life long, unto this day; the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named upon them, and the

name of my fathers, Abraham and Isaac, and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth!"

When Joseph saw that his father had laid his right hand upon Ephraim, the youngest son, he was displeased; for in those times it was thought the laying on of the right hand gave the greatest honour and blessing, and they were always anxious to give this great honour and blessing to the *eldest* son. And he said to his father, "Not so, my father; this one, Manasseh, is the first-born: put thy right hand upon his head." But Jacob refused; he knew what was God's will, and said, "I know it, my son, but it may not be so. Manasseh shall indeed become great, and be a mighty people; but truly his younger brother shall become greater, and be more blessed than he." Then he added, "Behold, I die. God will be with you, and one day bring you again into the land of your fathers, and I give unto thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took from the Amorite with my sword and with my bow!"

Then Jacob called all his sons to him, and blessed them. And God gave him power and knowledge to tell them each what should be their future lot and that of their descendants. And when he had told them all

this he charged them to carry back his body into the land of Canaan, and to bury it with his fathers, in the cave which Abraham had bought, long before, of the people of the country.

So Jacob died, and Joseph fell upon his father's face, and wept upon him, and kissed him. And all the people made great lamentation.

CHAPTER XXI.

JACOB'S BURIAL.

WHEN any of the Israelites died, it was the custom of their friends to make a great mourning for them. The family and neighbours dressed themselves in rough coarse clothes, and all sat together on the ground weeping, and making lamentation. Sometimes one of them would sing slowly and sadly a sort of song, telling of the good deeds and kind manners of the friend they had lost.

All this was done when Jacob died; and his body was embalmed, or wrapped up with sweet spices, to keep it from decay. This was finished in forty days. The Egyptians mourned for him seventy days, because he was the father of their wise and good ruler Joseph, and they wished to show him respeet in every way. When these days of mourning were past, Joseph asked some of those who lived in the house of Pharaoh to speak to the king for him. He could not speak for himself, because those who had been watching over

a dead body were not allowed to go near anybody else till after the burial. He asked them therefore to tell Pharaoh that before Jacob left Canaan he had made a grave for himself, and had now made Joseph swear that he would carry his body up out of Egypt, and lay it in this grave. And Joseph wanted Pharaoh's leave to go into Canaan to keep his promise. He begged them to tell Pharaoh that he would be sure to return to Egypt again very soon.

And when the king heard what he wanted, he gave him leave to go.

So Joseph went to bury his father, and with him went all the servants of Pharaoh, all the rulers of his household, and all the great, rich men who helped to govern the land of Egypt. With these were all Joseph's family, his brethren, and all his grown-up relations. The whole party travelled in chariots or on horseback, and it was a very great company.

And when they came to the river Jordan, which borders Canaan, they stopped at the threshing floor of a man named Atad. This was a large open space of ground in which oxen used to walk about treading the corn out of the ears of the wheat. In this place all the company halted, and made fresh mourning and

lamentation for seven days. When the people of the country, the Canaanites, saw them sitting there weeping, they said to each other: This is a sore mourning for the Egyptians. They must have lost some great man, whom they loved and respected very much indeed; and in remembrance of it they changed the name of the place, and called it Abel-mizraim.

As soon as this seven days of lamentation was over, his sons did as Jacob had commanded them. They carried his body into the land of Canaan, and laid it in the cave with the bodies of his forefathers.

Abraham, Jacob's grandfather, had bought the ground long before of the people of the country, and he and Sarah were buried there; also Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob's father and mother. There Jacob also had laid his wife Leah, and thither at last his sons carried his body, in obedience to his command.

CHAPTER XXII.

JOSEPH COMFORTS HIS BRETHREN.

WHEN all was finished, Joseph, his brethren, and all the Egyptians went back into Egypt.

It would seem as if the Israelites might have gone on living in rest and peace. They had a beautiful rich country for their flocks, they all lived together, the Egyptians were kind to them, and their brother was ruler over all the land, and could do them good in whatever way he pleased. But people who have known what was right, and have yet done what was wrong, never feel quite safe and happy. The conscience tells them they deserve punishment, and they are always fearing which way it will come. So when Joseph's brothers got back to Egypt and were settled again in Goshen, they began to get uneasy. They talked together, and said to each other that "perhaps it was only for their father's sake that Joseph had been kind to them, and pretended to forgive them. Very likely now their

father was gone he would hate them, and certainly punish them for all the evil they had done to him." This was very unjust to Joseph. They ought to have trusted him more. But as they had been deceitful themselves they could hardly believe that he was true.

At last they resolved to send a messenger to him. This messenger was to tell him that, before their father died, he had commanded them to beg Joseph's pardon for all the evil that they had done unto him, and to confess how wrongly they had acted. They were also to remind him that he and they and their father all acknowledged and worshipped the same true God.

Joseph was grieved at this, and wept when the messenger spoke to him. Then his brethren came and fell on their knees and bowed their faces to the ground before him. And they said, "Behold, we be thy servants."

But Joseph had truly forgiven them long ago. So he said, "Fear not, for am I in the place of God? God will judge and punish evil doers; but men must be merciful and forgive each other their trespasses. You thought to do me evil, but God brought great good out of your wrong. He made your cruelty the means of sending me into Egypt that I might be there when the famine came, and be able, by his help, to save you and the

Egyptians from starving. You see how it has all come to pass. Now you need not be unhappy or afraid; trust me, and I will take care of you and your little ones."

So he comforted them and spake kindly unto them.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Joseph's Death.

After this they all lived in Egypt till Joseph was a hundred and ten years old. His sons married, and their children were brought up in Joseph's house. These were his grandchildren. In time they grew to be men and women, and married also. Their little ones were his great grandchildren.

When Joseph was a hundred and ten years old he summoned his brothers around him, and said to them, "I die, and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land, unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give it to them."

Just at this time there did not seem any reason why the Israelites should leave a country where they were living in plenty and safety. But Joseph had real faith in God's promises, and therefore he knew, that one day they would surely go to live in Canaan again. He could not tell *how* it would be brought about, but he believed what God had said.

Perhaps he took such pains to remind his brethren of their future prospects, and that the land they were then living in was not to be their settled resting-place, in the hope that the thought of it might help to keep them from falling into the idolatrous practices of the heathen Egyptians.

Joseph, like his father, wished his body to rest in the land of his ancestors. But he did not, as Jacob did, ask his brothers to carry him there directly after his death. He told them to take care of his body, and, when it pleased God to lead them into Canaan, to carry it with them, and bury it there. The having to take care of the precious remains of one who had so loved and forgiven them, might be another help against their forgetting the One true God whom he had so well served and honoured.

Joseph made them *promise* to do as he wished, and after having again reminded them of the certain fulfilment of God's declared purpose, he died.

With sorrow and weeping for the loss of such a brother, must the Israelites have set about obeying his commands. They embalmed his body in the same manner as they had done that of Jacob; and then it was put into a coffin, to be taken care of till they left Egypt.

This event did not happen till 144 years lat
Then, exactly as Joseph had said, God made a w
for them to go and conquer the promised land. Wh
they had obtained possession of it, they laid his bor
in a piece of land which Jacob, his father, had boug
before the famine, or their coming into Egypt. A
this piece of land was in that part of Canaan whi
was given to the sons of Joseph as their share of t
country.

Joseph was seventeen years old when he was sold in
Egypt, thirty years old when he was made governc
and he ruled the land eighty years.

THE END.

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